



ICHLA Education Committee Meeting Minutes
IGCS-Foyer 2West
Thursday, June 1, 2006 3:00pm

Committee Members:

Christine Cde Baca, Education Committee Chair
Marilee Updike, Indianapolis Public Schools ESL/ESL Task Force
Maria Dalhoumi, School City of East Chicago ESL
Ellen Krulewitch, Elkhart Community Schools ENL
Hilda Vázquez, ICHLA Commissioner/IDOE
Sara Williams, Indiana Partnerships Center

ICHLA Staff Members:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director
Laura Barrett, Education Researcher
Ryan Marques, Business/Economic Development Researcher

I. Welcome, Introductions

Chair Cde Baca opened the Education Committee discussion. She asked new members to give a brief introduction.

Kathryn Lee introduced herself as the Education Program Coordinator for the Civil Rights Commission and acknowledged her experience as a licensed speech language pathologist.

Sara Williams introduced herself as the ESL Program Coordinator for Indiana Partnerships Center.

II. Review & Discussion of Assignments

Chair Cde Baca began discussion with Committee assignments. She provided bilingual program information from Colorado and information on Colorado's high school business internship program. Arrupe Jesuit High School in Denver, Colorado modeled a work study program after Cristo Rey in Chicago, Illinois. This program gives students entering 9th grade the opportunity to work at a corporate job. This job provides a reduction in the student's tuition. Arrupe Jesuit High School was founded in 2003 and has had a great deal of success. Chair Cde Baca has many newspaper articles available that highlight the school's success stories.

Director Mendoza mentioned a Cristo Rey school that will be opening in Indianapolis this year.

Chair Cde Baca explained how the Cristo Rey program in Colorado is a school that first began with 9th graders. Her sister is an active participant on the school's board of directors.

Maria Dalhoumi discussed the Adult Education Program in East Chicago. East Chicago has experimented with a couple of pilot programs. Omni Source has worked with the local employees. The teachers helped develop a curriculum to meet both employer and employee needs. Maria Dalhoumi explained that these sessions were once conducted through translations; they are currently held in English-only sessions. She explained that commentary forms were distributed and both employers and employees appeared extremely pleased with the program.

Chair Cde Baca discussed the issues that may arise from hiring only Spanish-speaking employees. She promised to send Maria Dalhoumi the contact information of other assistance organizations that provide to employers where safety is an issue. Employers must know that they cannot discriminate against issues regarding employment. Employees may still file a discrimination lawsuit if it exists.

Ellen Krulewitch mentioned that East Chicago has a Human Rights program.

Maria Dalhoumi confirmed that the employers did compensate their employees for the sessions attended; a strike still took place soon after. Many of the former Omni Source employees have "taken off on their own." A very positive word has developed about Omni Source. Maria Dalhoumi also discussed the English Works pilot program in Indiana and mentioned how it can be extremely time intensive, yet a great model reflecting positive results. She also acknowledged a distance learning ESL program administered in Bloomington, Indiana called "Crossroads Café."

Marilee Updike acknowledged that the "Crossroads Café" program has been available through the government access channels for many years.

Maria Dalhoumi wanted to "get the word out" to the community for those that could not attend classes. Individuals are provided with take-home videos and were offered alternative communication through the telephone, personal meetings or mailings. She explained that individuals could listen to the video and review the workbook, return with their homework, review and then complete a test of their knowledge. Individuals were given high school credit hours if they scored 80% or higher. Maria Dalhoumi announced that there was currently a waiting list for this program. She stressed that the corporation's goal is to begin part 2, as there are 13 units for the first section and 13 more to come.

Chair Cde Baca agreed that these programs will indeed empower the parents.

Maria Dalhoumi also commented on two other initiatives that East Chicago offers for parents of ESL students. One program called "Parent University" engages activities with both ESL students and their parents; this initiative includes a special keynote

speaker. Both morning and evening ESL teachers encourage the children to succeed in school. Maria Dalhoumi confirmed that there is already a dialogue established. She provided literature (English/Spanish registration forms) about the City of East Chicago's 18th "Parent University." She said, "The goal is to spread it across the board."

Maria Dalhoumi also discussed the "Free for Me" program from the organization called Communities in Schools (CIS). She mentioned that their city is the most impoverished city in the entire state. CIS has partnered with Title I; 9 out of 10 schools will be Title I. CIS plans to partner with the program so that parents might sign up in advance to volunteer in school. The volunteers determine how many hours they will complete throughout the year. All materials are in Spanish. Their school corporation plans to try implement this program district wide; otherwise, any school may be involved. The school corporation is very eager to test this program during the time of school registration. She explained that the next step is to get the businesses involved.

Ellen Krulewitch informed committee members that the Elkhart Community Schools have a specific person who runs the CARES program (includes about 1,500 volunteers). She referred any program questions to the CARES Coordinator, Ellen Moore; she is responsible for the large program growth in predominantly Title I schools.

Kathryn Lee asked if Ellen Moore administers with senior citizens.

Ellen Krulewitch explained how the CARES program allows an employee ½ hour to an hour for student mentoring; the mentors are primarily older adults. She said that this program has tapped into a huge portion of the Elkhart community.

Kathryn Lee spoke about her own children's experiences while residing in Seattle, Washington. Her children were involved with senior citizens; this mentorship was very positive with the students.

Ellen Krulewitch informed the committee that a mentor must be 18 years or older and are subject to a background check.

Maria Dalhoumi asked how long the CARES program had been in place.

Ellen Krulewitch confirmed that the program was established 6-7 years ago.

Maria Dalhoumi explained how the East Chicago Schools used to offer an "adopt a student" exchange program through a partnership with a company called Inland. Unfortunately, those program volunteers no longer exist since Inland was purchased by another company called Mittal.

Ellen Krulewitch explained that many Elkhart Community School mentors follow their students throughout school; she still “follows” her student. Several churches are also very involved.

Ryan Marques asked about East Chicago’s involvement with Jr. Achievement.

Maria Dalhoumi said that East Chicago Schools have not recently had those programs.

Ellen Krulewitch mentioned how Elkhart Community Schools had once dedicated an entire faculty to Jr. Achievement. Schools have been focusing more attention on consumer type activities rather than simply trade; sometimes they might have products to sell. She was pleased to speak about Elkhart’s large volunteer community. The Jr. Achievement now focuses on volunteers going into schools to discuss business.

Ellen Krulewitch discussed a recent meeting with Indiana University officials about a program that have piloted with teachers. The director of this program said that they would be willing to expand their services across the state; it is a very rigorous program. Ellen Krulewitch described this program as a “promising possibility.” It would include focal group sessions with live professors, including excellent materials. This program uses cooperative learning and focuses on current issues and best practices. She felt that students would definitely benefit from this program.

Marilee Updike provided literature and discussed how the Interdisciplinary Collaborative Program (ICP) benefits teachers. This program solicits students from all school districts. The program provides 9 credit hours of free certification; this is a big deal. One certification is offered online. Upon completion, students may participate in the Tandem Certification for Indiana Teachers (TACIT) online. This is designed for classroom/content area teachers/ESL teachers who have completed the ICP. Marilee Updike acknowledged Dr. Faridah Pawan as the author of the original grants for this program. Marilee Updike also provided best practices literature. She mentioned the presence of a two-way development program that is currently offered at Lawrence Schools in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Maria Dalhoumi mentioned that East Chicago also has a pseudo two-way program.

Marilee Updike stated that those who apply for the Fort Wayne program must do so in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She was pleased to see at least one Hispanic student involved in the program. Marilee Updike assured the committee about the quality of the program; it is somewhat different from its original version.

Hilda Vázquez explained that the Lawrence School Corporation begins this program while students are in kindergarten and then gradually integrates the students the students while they are in the 4th grade. The hope is that these kids continue to receive

literacy at home. Hilda Vázquez said that this is the most successful program, but is the least available.

Marilee Updike discussed how the most successful study (two-way developmental bilingual education) focuses on English taught through content; these students will learn more. Unfortunately, the school corporations are lacking enough bilingual teachers for this type of education. Marilee Updike provided more information about pre-school learning from the NCLA website. She said, “The earlier you can start, the better you are.” She also included a power point presentation that was presented to the principals of the Indianapolis schools. She briefly outlined the key points of the presentation. Marilee Updike stressed the importance of comprehension and vocabulary. She said, “If you don’t focus on it, there is no possibility of ever having enough to be successful with anything.” Marilee Updike discussed modification and accommodations and how mainstream students do not tend to do this. She said that some of the best teachers “dumb down” the curriculum. Kids can be successful. She suggested that teachers modify what they are teaching and make the content comprehensible. Indiana is burdened with a lot of English-speaking teachers. She mentioned how academic vocabulary is very important; it takes a lifetime to learn a language. Kids often spend more time completing a worksheet rather than talking. Teachers should not simplify the vocabulary, yet go beyond memorization. Marilee Updike agreed that memorizing lists of words does not work. Teachers have to help their students make the necessary connections. This is absolutely necessary. She would like to get more content teachers that will focus on both content and language objectives. Most teachers do not feel like they should teach both content and language if they are only a content teacher. Teachers often speak very fast and use a lot of jargon. Marilee Updike urges teachers to use hands-on activities and words that children understand. She informed committee members that the research for learning takes approximately 5-7 years, as the federal government does not quite understand this concept.

Marilee Updike felt that the biggest concerns involving education are the learning strategies; children must be taught how to learn.

Maria Dalhoumi referred to an excellent math program called “Everyday Mathematics.” This group has been meeting for many years and has piloted everyday math. Everyone eventually bought into this idea. Maria Dalhoumi explained how this program is very standard/research-based, created by a foundation. This program teaches children how to make their own understanding of their own mathematics. They use higher order thinking, embedded into cognitive thinking; this is all best practice. This program also has a trainer model available and has strong parental involvement during family nights. “Everyday Mathematics” has been very successful; ISTEP math test scores have also risen. The program includes two groups of students: bilingual students who have grown up around it and LEP students (researching current data). Maria Dalhoumi was pleased to comment on the students’ love for math and how it addresses the state standards.

Chair Cde Baca agreed that this type of program teaches kids how to learn.

Sara Williams asked if the teachers work alongside the children. She requested more information on this program.

Ellen Krulewitch explained the difficulties involved when the parents do not have at least a general education for everyday math.

Maria Dalhoumi explained that this program can turn the other way; she could teach her own parents.

Kathryn Lee was concerned about the role reversal issue and the necessary research.

Ellen Krulewitch informed the committee members that she began taking a medical interpreter's class. She will receive 40 hours of training in addition to her current Spanish. This class is offered through Patia Translations. They conduct a pre-interview to check for fluency in both English and Spanish. A written and oral exam is then administered at the end of the day. Ellen Krulewitch explained that the state does not currently offer a certificate. The total cost for the exam is approximately \$350.00.

Hilda Vázquez asked if the program was called "Bridging the Gap."

Ellen confirmed that the program was not "Bridging the Gap."

Ellen Krulewitch discussed her assignment; research language assessment issues. She originally invited her colleague, Cindy O'Brien, to attend the committee meeting and thoroughly explain the ISTAR requirements and issues. Ellen Krulewitch spoke about parents being confused with the Woodcock Muñoz testing. This test was used as a baseline. The LAS Links English Proficiency Assessment is a tool that tests children as a group in all areas of study except the oral test. Questions are repeated up to three times before a student must provide an answer. She explained that LAS Links is used as a speaking portion of the oral test. Ellen Krulewitch said that the easiest way of recording voice is to use part of the LAS Links test as their speaking skills assessment. ISTAR serves as the evaluation. ISTAR is administered twice a year for students who have not been in a U.S. school for three consecutive years. "Consecutive years" is the important piece. The completed test does not count if a student leaves for a month; students must be in class at least 162 days. ISTAR is an online assessment that evaluates both language and math skills. Ellen Krulewitch said that several math teachers dislike ISTAR testing because they feel that the ENL teacher should be responsible for an ENL student. Math teachers are required to give the assessment regardless. Ellen Krulewitch confirmed that once a student completes ISTEP, they will continue to be tested through this assessment. She expressed that ISTAR is only a problem if the student has a new teacher. Elkhart Schools decided to

evaluate students in the spring (optional). The ENL teacher completes the update in August. This will show the fall date as the update.

Maria Dalhoumi asked if the Elkhart Schools evaluate students once a year.

Ellen confirmed that the Elkhart Schools are evaluated twice a year.

Marilee Updike explained that Indianapolis Schools are evaluated in the fall and again in the spring. She discussed the problem with the ISTAR assessment. She said, "ISTAR is not a bad assessment, but they tweaked it for ESL." The problem is there is no correlation between that assessment and ISTEP. The schools must deal with the scores; they are not being counted. Marilee Updike spoke about the linking study that is being encouraged, however, there are not enough students completing the study to satisfy the federal requirements. She said, "All of these numbers are done and no one is passing." Marilee Updike felt that most teachers were not provided with enough options. If the students are given ISTAR, then their scores are counted as an automatic failure towards ISTEP. Marilee Updike said that Dr. Reed requested that teachers also give the ISTAR assessment to "regular kids" as well. She said that they think these students will still fail. Marilee Updike felt that administering the ISTAR assessment was like Catch 22; "If a teacher gives the assessment and is completely aware that they cannot perform, it must be assumed that the student would fail no matter what instrument they are tested on." This will cause some schools to fail.

Maria Dalhoumi was not aware of the ISTAR failure scores.

Marilee Updike mentioned that ISTAR began a few years ago.

Ellen Krulewitch explained that if those schools administered all of the tests (LAS Links, ISTEP, etc.) they would take half the school year in order to complete testing. She encouraged educators to administer the LAS Links for the oral testing and part of another test for the remainder. This will be counted as the ongoing test that takes the place of the Woodcock Muñoz assessment.

Hilda Vázquez confirmed that an English-proficient test will be available in the fall of 2006. Her department preferred that the State used a statewide assessment. This means that some schools did not use an assessment or have a tool. Hilda Vázquez stressed the importance of every school remaining on the "same page." She also mentioned a screener tool that will be available in July, called a LAS Links screener. Children will be tested with this tool from spring to spring. Schools must baseline students with the screener tool.

Ellen Krulewitch said, "Every school in the State of Indiana will be a school that will fail AYP within the next 5-10 years."

Ellen Krulewitch discussed the growing concern of gang education. The local Elkhart news reported on a 14 year-old that was murdered in February due to gang

activity; a 16 year-old was also shot shortly after. Female gang members also appear to be on the rise and have become very violent. She explained how there is more evidence of “tagging” (gang graffiti symbols). Gang members often tie sneakers together and throw them over a telephone line to mark a “drug house.” Ellen Krulewitch informed the committee that she is a part of an anti-gang coalition. This coalition is brainstorming positive projects for at risk children. Communities in Schools (CIS) has been helping with this initiative. CIS is taking 7 at-risk males on a spelunking excursion; these students will have to depend on one another over the weekend. This effort will teach these children that they are not as tough as they think; they must rely on others. Ellen Krulewitch also gave reference to another group of Elkhart teachers who are trying to do a similar activity involving at-risk females. She acknowledged that the Elkhart area has seen a lot of “wannabee” gang members involved in the following gangs: Sureños, Norteños, Latin Kings and the Vatos Locos.

Marilee Updike mentioned the Marion County Safe Street Task Force.

Sara Williams explained how her organization focuses on parental involvement. She discussed the parent gathering that will be held in July. This gathering will help promote/educate Latino parents to be leaders for their children. She is also involved in the Statewide Task Force for Diversity Dialogues. This task force reaches out to 6 different districts.

III. Next Steps

Chair Cde Baca reminded committee members that Amy Mendoza, Hilda Vázquez and herself would present the California study at the next ICHLA Education Committee meeting. She requested that they set aside a separate meeting before the next Committee meeting. She asked those members who did not present their assignments at this meeting to do so at the next committee meeting. Ryan Marques, ICHLA staff, will also provide his research findings for Hispanic/Latino Majors/Areas of Study.

IV. Adjournment

Chair Cde Baca scheduled the next committee meeting for July 13, 2006 from 3:00pm-4:30pm. Further meeting details/minutes will be provided at a later date.

